

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 T-03 OMB-01 GAC-01 ACDA-19 MC-02 CU-04

IO-12 NIC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

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FBO-01 SY-07 USSS-00 RSR-01 /129 W  
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R 190438 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1516

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 1726

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJ: CONTINUING WIDESPREAD STUDENT UNREST

REF: TEHRAN 1353

SUMMARY: DURING LAST THREE WEEK PERIOD STUDENT UNREST AND DEMONSTRATIONS, SOMETIMES ACCOMPANIED BY VIOLENCE ON PART OF STUDENTS AND POLICE, HAS SPREAD ACROSS IRAN AND VIRTUALLY EVERY MAJOR COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OR TECHNICAL TRAINING SCHOOL IN THE COUNTRY IS AFFECTED. STUDENT MOTIVES ARE DIFFICULT TO DEFINE BUT THROUGHOUT THEIR PROTESTS RUNS AND ANTIREGIME THEME WHICH OFTEN FOCUSES ON HIGH TUITION COSTS AND IS SOMETIMES EXPRESSED IN TERMS OF ATTACKS ON GOI EXPENDITURES, PARTICULARLY FOR US WEAPONS. END SUMMARY.

1. BEGINNINGS OF CURRENT PERIOD OF STUDENT UNREST CAN BE FOUND AS LONG AGO AS JANUARY 21 CELEBRATIONS OF TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF WHITE REVOLUTION. CAMPUS DEMONSTRATIONS AT VARIOUS UNIVERSITIES CONTINUED FROM THAT TIME IN OFF AGAIN -- ON AGAIN FASHION UNTIL ABOUT THREE WEEKS AGO WHEN STUDENT DISSIDENT ACTIVITIES CAME MORE WIDESPREAD AND HAVE

FINALLY RESULTED IN THE CLOSURE, TO ONE DEGREE OR ANOTHER, OF NEARLY ALL OF IRAN'S MAJOR CENTERS OF HIGHER  
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EDUCATION.

2. MOST RECENT SERIES OF DEMONSTRATIONS SEEM TO HAVE BEGUN AT JONDI SHAPOUR UNIVERSITY IN AHWAZ BUT RIOTS HAVBKALSO TAKENUQLACE AT KARAJ TRAINING COLLEGE, PAHLAVI UNIVERSITY IN SHIRAZ, ARYAMEHR UNIVERSITY IN ISFAHAN AND ITS RELATED CAMPUS IN TEHRAN, NATIONAL UNIVERSITY IN TEHRAN ( WHERE COLLEGE CAFETERIA WAS REPORTEDLY WRECKED), TEHRAN UNIVERSITY ( TWCIE) AND TABRIZ UNIVERSITY AMONG OTHERS.

3. UPON LEARNING THAT RIOT WAS IN PROGRESS ON TEHRAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUS, EMBOFF DROVE TO SCENE TO OBSERVE BUT FOUND THAT THREE TRUCKLOADS OF RIOT POLICE WEARING PLASTIC FACE SHIELDS AND CARRYING HARDWOOD TRUNCHEONS MD PUT AN END TO INCIDENT. CAMPUS WAS PRACTICALLY DESERTED WITH MOST GATES LOCKED AND CAMPUS POLICE BOLSTERED BY RIOT POLICE WERE CAREFULLY CONTROLLING ENTRY AND EXIT. IT LATER DEVELOPED THAT STUDENTS REGISTERING FOR NEW TERM AT SCIENCE FACULTY WERE PROTESTING REPORTED ARREST ON PREVIOUS DAY OF 30 STUDENTS AT ARYAMEHR TEHRAN CAMPUS WHO HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATING REPUTEDLY TO MARK ANNIVERSARY OF SIAKAL INCIDENT. (1971 ATTACK BY GUERILLA GROUP ON ISOLATED GENDARMERIE POST IN GILAN PROVINCE). DR. ( FNU) ZIRAKHZADEH, DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH AT THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND HIGHER EDUCATION, LATER CONFIRMED THAT ADDITIONAL ARRESTS WERE MADE AT TEHRAN UNIVERSITY ALTHOUGH HE COULD NOT SUPPLY FIGURES.

4. LARGEST AND BLOODIEST ENCOUNTER TO DATE TOOK PLACE IN TABRIZ WHERE STUDENTS BEGAN DEMONSTRATION OVER TUITION COSTS AND OTHER LOCAL ISSUES. POLICE INTERVENED AND CONFRONTATION ESCALATED INTO THREE- DAY MELEE WITH REPORTS OF OVER 200 STUDENTS INJURED, SOME SERIOUSLY. FIGURES FOR STUDENTS KILLED RANGE FROM THREE TO ELEVEN BUT PRECISE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONFIRM. POLICE AND SAVAK EVENTUALLY RAIDED ALL CAMPUS DORMITORIES, INCLUDING THOSE OF GIRLS, DROVE ALL STUDENTS FROM CAMPUS AND CLOSED THE UNIVERSITY DOWN FOR REMAINDER OF TERM. TABRIZ CONSULATE WILL REPORT ON THIS INCIDENT IN DETAIL.

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5. MOTIVATIONS FOR PRESENT SPATE OF UNREST ARE NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR. THIS IS DUE IN PART TO THE EFFICIENCY OF THE

SECURITY FORCES WHO TEND TO BREAK UP DEMONSTRATIONS BEFORE MOTIVES AND GOALS RE MADE KNOWN; IN PART TO THE TENDENCY OF STUDENTS IN DISGUISE DISSATISFACTION OVER POLITICAL ISSUES WITH A LOCAL GRIEVANCE OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER IN ORDER TO AVOID MORE SEVERE PUNISHMENT IF CAUGHT; AND TO LACK OF PUBLICITY -- NO WORD OF THE VARIOUS DISTURBANCES HAS APPEARED IN THE LOCAL PAPERS.

SOME RIOTS HAVE EVIDENTLY BEEN SPARKED BY HEAVY-HANDED POLICE ACTION AGAINST OTHER DEMONSTRATORS AS IN THE INSTANCE NOTED IN PARA 3 ABOVE AND IN THE CASE OF A RIOT WHICH, ACCORDING TO ISFAHAN IAS DIRECTOR LONNIE DEL RAE, TOOK PLACE AT ARYAMEHR UNIVERSITY OVER A RUMOR ( APPRENTLY FALSE) THAT SEVEN STUDENTS WERE ARRESTED AT TEHRAN UNIVERSITY BY SAVAK, TAKEN TO KERMANSHAH AND SHOT. HOWEVER, A DEFINITE ANTI-SHAH THEME IS DISCERNIBLE THROUGHOUT THE STUDENT PROTESTS. OCCASIONALLY THE MONARCH HIMSELF HAS BEEN CRITICIZED, SOMETIMES IN VITRIOLIC TERMS, AND AT OTHER TIMES HIS PROGRAMS AND POLICIES ARE CASTIGATED. SUCH DISCONTENTS ARE OFTEN CHanneLED INTO CRITICISM OF HIGH TUITIONS AT IRANIAN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES, A STRATEGEM WHICH, ACCORDING TO DR. PARVIZ ASADI OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, IS A COVER FOR DISSATISFACTION WITH EXPENDITURES ON US ARMS AND OTHER GOI FISCAL POLICIES AS UNVEILED BY PRIME MINISTER HOVEYDA IN HIS NEW TEN BILLION DOLLAR BUDGET.

COMMENT: SECURITY AUTHORITIES HAVE MAINTAINED CONTROL OF THE STUDENT SITUATION BUT ONLY BY CLOSING DOWN IRAN'S SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION. HOWEVER, THE WIDESPREAD AND CONTINUING NATURE OF THESE DEMONSTRATIONS IS YET ANOTHER INDICATION OF THE DEPTH OF ANTI-REGIME FEELING AMONG THE STUDENTS, PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING THAT PROTESTING STUDENTS NOT ONLY RUN THE RISK OF PHYSICAL INJURY IN CONFRONTATIONS WITH POLICE BUT THEY COULD ALSO BE EXPELLED, JAILED OR DRAFTED INTO THE ARMED FORCES.

HELMS

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* CONFIDENTIAL

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